

Message Text

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USIA-06 IO-10 OMB-01 SAM-01 SAJ-01 ACDA-05 EB-07

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DRAFTED BY NEA/ARP:FMDICKMAN:DRW
APPROVED BY NEA:MR.ATHERTON
INR/RNA:MR.JONES
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TO AMEMBASSY JIDDA
INFO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI
AMEMBASSY DOHA
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
AMEMBASSY MANAMA
AMEMBASSY MUSCAT
AMEMBASSY SANA

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, SA, MU

SUBJECT: SAUDI-OMANI BORDER SETTLEMENT: SAUDI INTEREST
IN CORRIDOR TO ARABIAN SEA

REF: JIDDA 4334

1. EMBASSY SHOULD TELL PRINCE SAUD THAT USG DOES NOT FEEL
IT CAN TAKE ANY OFFICIAL POSITION ON SAUDI INTEREST IN
HAVING CORRIDOR CUTTING THROUGH DHOFAR AND HADRAMAUT SINCE

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THIS IS ESSENTIALLY A PENINSULA MATTER.

2. AS FRIENDS OF SAUDI ARABIA, HOWEVER, FOLLOWING QUESTIONS OCCUR TO US AS RESULT OF PRINCE SAUD'S GOING TO AMBASSADOR. WE THINK SAUDIS MIGHT HAVE THESE IN MIND AS THEY WEIGH IMPLICATIONS OF WHETHER TO SEEK TO OBTAIN CORRIDOR TO ARABIAN SEA:

A. WOULD OMAN BE WILLING TO SURRENDER ANY LARGE PORTION OF WESTERN DHOFAR, FOR WHICH IT HAS DEVOTED SO MANY RESOURCES TO ITS RECOVERY AND CONTROL, UNLESS POSSIBLY IT WAS A RELATIVELY NARROW STRIP OF LAND SEPARATING OMAN FROM PDRY AND OMAN RECEIVED SOMETHING OF SIGNIFICANT VALUE IN RETURN (SUCH AS A SETTLEMENT IN THE NORTH WHERE THE OMANI, UAE AND SAUDI BOUNDARY MEET)?

B. COULD PDRY BE EXCLUDED FROM PICTURE EVEN IF CORRIDOR CUT THROUGH OMANI TERRITORY? EVEN IF SAG HAD IN MIND THAT CORRIDOR WOULD SEPARATE OMAN AND PDRY AND THEREBY BRING AN END TO DHOFAR INSURGENCY, WE DOUBT THAT PDRY WOULD ACCEPT THIS AND STOP ITS SUPPORT OF INSURGENTS. IN ALL LIKELIHOOD, CORRIDOR WOULD SIMPLY CREATE A NEW INSURGENCY SITUATION WHERE SAUDIS WOULD HAVE TO PROTECT HIGHLY VULNERABLE STRIP OF LAND AND PIPELINE, IF ONE IS BUILT, FROM INFILTRATORS.

C. WOULD A SAUDI CORRIDOR NOT GIVE PDRY A GOLDEN OPPORTUNITY TO TIE DOWN SIGNIFICANT SAUDI MILITARY RESOURCES AT MINIMAL COST TO PDRY? GIVEN SAUDI ARABIA'S LIMITED MILITARY RESOURCES, THESE WOULD PROBABLY BE STRETCHED VERY THIN ELSEWHERE IF IT HAD TO SEND SUBSTANTIAL NUMBERS TO PROTECT CORRIDOR. IF ONLY LIMITED MILITARY FORCE ASSIGNED TO PROTECTIVE DUTY, CORRIDOR COULD BECOME AN EASIER AREA OF OPERATION FOR PDRY-SUPPORTED INSURGENCY THAT IS CASE IN DHOFAR AT PRESENT TIME.

D. WHAT INTERNATIONAL LEGAL PROBLEMS MIGHT DEVELOP? IT IS OUR UNDERSTANDING THAT PDRY-OMAN BOUNDARY HAS NEVER BEEN DEMARCATED AND IS SUBJECT DISPUTE. SHOULD OMAN AGREE TO RELINQUISH TO SAUDIS A SLICE OF WESTERN DHOFAR, SAG MIGHT WELL FIND ITSELF WITH ADDITIONAL PROBLEM OF
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GAINING INTERNATIONAL RECOGNITION FOR CORRIDOR BORDER ON PDRY SIDE, AND IT WOULD BE DIFFICULT TO SHOW ANY HISTORIC OR ETHNIC SAUDI TIES TO AREA.

E. FINALLY, IF SAUDI NEED FOR PIPELINE SOUTH TO ARABIAN SEA IS ECONOMICALLY AND TECHNICALLY FEASIBLE, COULD SAG NOT EXPLORE POSSIBILITY OF ARRANGEMENT WITH OMAN GOVT UNDER WHICH LATTER WOULD NOT BE ASKED TO SURRENDER SOVEREIGNTY

TO A CORRIDOR TO THE SEA? HAS SAG THOUGHT OF ARRANGEMENT
SIMILIAR TO THAT IN EFFECT FOR TAPLINE?

3. AFTER PRESENTING THESE QUESTIONS, YOU SHOULD RE-
ITERATE THAT THESE ARE NOTHING MORE THAN QUESTIONS THAT
HAVE OCCURRED TO US AND WHICH WE ARE PASSING ON TO PRINCE
SAUD IN AS MUCH AS HE RAISED SUBJECT WITH US. WE SEE
THIS AS MATTER TO BE DEALT WITH BY THE COUNTRIES IN THE
AREA. INGERSOLL

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